

# MOUNT VERNON

*Discover the Real George Washington*

## **Real Distilling Starts for Two Weeks at George Washington's Distillery**

Authentic distilling begins this week at George Washington's Distillery for a two-week period. The goal of this session, not open to the public, is to generate 100 gallons of whiskey using Washington's recipe. Half of the supply will be bottled and sold at Mount Vernon starting this summer (likely in June) as George Washington's Rye Spirit. This product will be un-aged, just like Washington's version of whiskey. Pints will be sold for a price still to be determined but most likely just under \$100. The remaining half will be aged in oak barrels for future sale as whiskey, also in pints at a price to be determined.

Master distiller Dave Pickerill, formerly of Maker's Mark, will lead the team of Mount Vernon employees – historians, historic trades interpreters, archaeologists, and educators – who will work to make Washington's recipe at the reconstructed Distillery. A daily blog will document their efforts: <http://makinggeorgewashingtonswhiskey.blogspot.com/> Requests to cover the distilling should be made to Melissa Wood by replying to this email or calling 703-799-5203.

Starting last August, Mount Vernon began offering for sale a commemorative gift box set that includes a shot glass and a 50 mL bottle consisting of 11 different whiskey brands blended and aged at Mount Vernon in 2005. The gift sets are \$25 and are available for purchase in person with a valid ID at the *Shops at Mount Vernon* or George Washington's Distillery. Mount Vernon's first attempt at distilling in the summer of 2007 yielded roughly a dozen gallons, which are being aged and will be sold as whiskey starting in the fall.

## **Mount Vernon's Distillery and Gristmill Opens April 1**

*Mount Vernon, VA* – George Washington’s Distillery & Gristmill open for the season on April 1. Visitors will be able to see costumed distillers operating copper stills, stirring mash tubs, and managing the boiler as they demonstrate 18th-century distilling. The two-story building also features a storage cellar with barrels, an office, and two bedrooms where the site manager and assistant would have lived. On the second floor, a History Channel video called “George Washington’s Liquid Gold” and a museum exhibit, “Spirits of Independence: George Washington and the Beginnings of the American Whiskey Industry,” tell the story of whiskey at Mount Vernon and its history in America. The Distillery is adjacent to George Washington’s Gristmill, a water-powered mill. At the Gristmill, costumed millers operate four floors of machinery to show visitors how Washington’s complex farming operation expanded to include a commercial gristmill which produced flour that was exported around the world.

George Washington’s Distillery & Gristmill are located three miles from the main Mount Vernon Estate on Route 235 South. Admission to the site is \$4 for adults, \$2 for children ages 6-11, and free for children 5 and under. When combined with admission to Mount Vernon, tickets are \$2 for adults, \$1.50 for children ages 6-11, and free for children 5 and under. The site is open April 1 – October 31, 2009.

George Washington was the only founding father to commercially operate a whiskey distillery, and its size and volume of production rank the building among the most important structures of its kind in 18th-century America. One of the most successful economic components of Mount Vernon, the distillery at peak production in 1799 utilized five stills and a boiler and produced 11,000 gallons of whiskey valued at \$7,500. George Washington’s desire to pursue the most innovative and creative farming practices of his time is demonstrated by his commitment to building such a large structure.

Mount Vernon archaeologists began their investigation of the site in 1997, a project which accelerated in 2001 with a generous donation from the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS). In addition to contributing a total of \$2.1 million to the project, DISCUS has named the Distillery the gateway to its newly developed American Whiskey Trail (<http://www.discus.org/trail/>).

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**Events, programs, and activities are subject to change.**

**Public Information: 703-780-2000; 703-799-8697 (TDD); <http://Visit.MountVernon.org>**

Since 1860, over 80 million visitors have made George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate & Gardens the most popular historic home in America. Through thought-provoking tours, entertaining events, and stimulating educational programs on the Estate and in classrooms across the nation, Mount Vernon strives to preserve George Washington's place in history as "First in War, First in Peace, and First in the Hearts of His Countrymen." Mount Vernon is owned and operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, America's oldest national preservation organization, founded in 1853. A picturesque drive to the southern end of the scenic George Washington Memorial Parkway, Mount Vernon is located just 16 miles from the nation's capital.

Hours of operation: April-August, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; March, September, October, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; November – February, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Regular admission rates: adults, \$15.00; senior citizens, \$14.00; children age 6-11, when accompanied by an adult, \$7.00; and children under age 5, FREE. Admission fees, restaurant and retail proceeds, along with private donations, support the operation and restoration of Mount Vernon.